The Report Committee for Katie J Dunlap
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report:

Describing and Analyzing English as a Lingua Franca

APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:

Supervisor:

Elaine K Horwitz

Veronica G Sardegna

Describing and Analyzing English as a Lingua Franca

by

Katie J Dunlap, B.A.

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Dedication

To my students

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Abstract

Describing and Analyzing English as a Lingua Franca

Katie J Dunlap, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

Supervisor: Elaine K Horwitz

Researchers are becoming increasingly interested in responding to the effects of the English language's viability as a Lingua Franca. English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) is being used predominantly in communication from one non-native speaker to another, and descriptive studies are just beginning to emerge (Dewey 2007; Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2004). This report offers a theoretical overview showing ELF's increasing relevance, and reviews empirical studies that have investigated how ELF is manifesting in the field of language education. These empirical studies are gaining significant traction, specifically in relation to descriptive linguistics, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics (House, 2003; Mauranen, 2003). In order to investigate a formal description of ELF, recent empirical work is reviewed after two seminal articles were published that helped gain viability into ELF as a distinct research area (i.e. Seidlhofer, 2001; Mauranen, 2003). Such reviews of empirical studies through the use of corpora are not meant to distinguish ELF as a distinct variety of English, but to simply allow for a deep description of how ELF is being used currently. Also discussed are the developments

to English language pedagogy and directions for future research as ELF scholars begin to re-conceptualize what is meant by language context and communication in ELF.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

I. INTRODUCTION

On a whim of desperation to improve my Spanish, an impromptu jaunt to Barcelona was how I decided to fulfill my adventurous attempt at finally, truly becoming bilingual. However, as a native English speaker from America, it was too easy for me to use my native language during my trip. English was everywhere—on the streets of *Las Ramblas* filled with tourists, in the cafes being used by Italians and Germans, and in my apartment which was inhabited by three Swedish speakers and me. I resorted to using English (like everyone else) as a Lingua Franca (or common language) to communicate with people from places all over the world. People kept telling me I was "lucky" English was my native language because I need not go through the painstaking process of acquiring it. However, I was jealous of everyone else because they had a true necessity and incredible motivation to become functioning bilinguals—or in the case of many Barcelonans, *trilingual* with their native Catalan. My hopes of becoming a bilingual would just have to wait.

Since leaving Barcelona, I have become increasingly astute as to how English does indeed function as our modern Lingua Franca. Now as an English as a Second Language teacher, the need for people to learn English fascinates and excites me. English has a way of offering a means by which people can experience life outside their home country and connect with cultures and peoples all over the globe.

As globalization leads to the spread of English, the way we communicate with each other is also changing. Traditional concepts of demographic boundaries in which English has existed are being expanded. Now, on every continent English can be heard and plays a role in the daily lives of many people. As English is adapting and merging into new contexts, it is being formulated to meet the needs of its users (Cogo & Dewey, 2006).

Most frequently cited, Crystal (2003) estimates that about one in four percent of people who use English are native speakers (NSs). Therefore, English is used primarily by non-native speakers (NNSs) to communicate with other non-native speakers (Crystal, 2003). Even though there are a large number of native English speakers in the world, English is still used in many areas where native speakers are not present (Haberland, 2011). English has become the modern Lingua Franca of our age. The contemporary term for the expansion of the English language is English as a Lingua Franca (ELF).

However, with the spread of English, differences from Standard English norms are made apparent. Mauranen, Hynninen, and Ranta (2010) state that conventionally, Standard English is assumed to be 'good English' as spoken by the educated native English speaker. As ELF is used internationally, its speakers often use different linguistic forms from that of Standard English. Seidlhofer, Breiteneder, and Pitzl (2006) reiterate, "[ELF] declares itself independent of the norms of English as a native language (ENL), and the authors who use it are confident that the ELF

they use is better suited to express their identity, and more intelligible for their readers than a 'better' English" (p. 6). In addition, ELF speakers often find it easier to communicate on an international plane than with NSs (Hülmbauer, 2007).

As English gains ground as the viable Lingua Franca of the world, linguists have become increasingly interested in responding to this phenomenon as they begin to study the mix of bilingual and multilingual communities. However, questions emerge as to how it is spreading, infiltrating new contexts, and re-conceptualizing others. It has the potential to shape the identities of its users and our ideas about the conventional norms of English.

In short, the purpose of this report is to describe the ways ELF is used and analyzed. My intent is not to distinguish ELF as a distinct variety of English, but rather show the way communication occurs in ELF and examine what implications may be taken from these examinations. Chapter 2 provides a historical context into the theoretical perspectives on the spreading of English. It also provides specific details on how to define ELF. Chapter 3 reviews important empirical research done on ELF to date and identifies current findings of specific innovative lexical patterns. Chapter 4 explains some theoretical implications from ELF research. And finally, Chapter 5 provides some answers into how to interpret ELF from a pedagogical standpoint.

II. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH

Seemingly, as English spreads around the globe so does the vast array of terms used to describe the phenomenon. The proliferation of terms attempting to describe the globalization of English has caused confusion in the research field and has also been problematic in attempting to clarify concrete ideas in the field. Therefore, it is necessary to identify these terms to make my intended meaning explicit in this report. The two most prominently used terms to describe the spreading of English are: *World Englishes* (*WE*) and *English as a Lingua Franca* (*ELF*). Although these terms have some overlap, each is now categorized into two distinct research fields. Jenkins' (2006) report on distinguishing these terms is the most referenced and comprehensive, so her observations will be reported here.

First, WE is concerned with *nativised* Englishes (e.g. Indian English, Nigerian English, Singaporean English). On the other hand, ELF describes the use of English by speakers who do not have a *nativised* English variety, but rather speakers of ELF who use English as a contact or shared language with speakers of varying linguistic backgrounds. Presently, a discussion of some of these overlapping definitions is of importance to recognize, as it frames my point of reference into the current discussion of the globalization of English. First, I will look at the historical role of WE as understood through the work of Kachru (1985) and some revised interpretations of his findings. Then, I will return to provide a detailed definition of ELF below.

Historical Perspectives

Traditionally, Kachru's (1985) model of three concentric circles of English speakers (*Figure 1*) has been considered the reference point of WE. The three circles are: 1) the "inner circle" - where English is used as a native language (ENL); 2) the "outer circle" - where English is used as a second or additional language (ESL)[1]; and 3) the "expanding circle" - where English is used as a foreign language (EFL)[2]. English first developed well-established norms during the colonial times in the outer circle areas (Canagarajah, 2006). In other places such as Germany and Russia (expanding circles), English has been welcomed as an auxiliary language, which is a language that is not native to the community it occurs in.

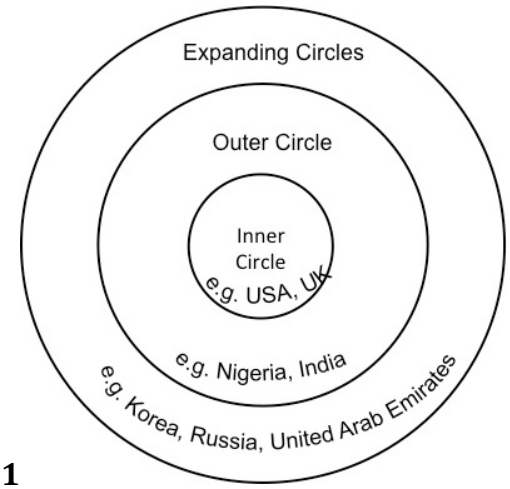

Figure 1

[1] ESL occurs when English is used as a non-native language in an English speaking region.
[2] EFL occurs when English is spoken in a non-English speaking region.

Kachru (1985) developed this model in order to analyze the English language in relation to separate speech communities that have been defined from geographical or political boundaries. He points to individual characteristics of linguistic and pragmatic features which belong to a certain variety, existing in one of the circles. The field of WE research tends to focus on the sociolinguistic differences (through grammar, lexicon, and phonology) that make up distinct English norms. For example, researchers can investigate a particular outer circle variety of English by finding specific speech patterns and speech markers characteristic of that particular variety of English.

However, since the publication of Kachru's (1985) article, he and others have suggested modifications to the concentric circles based on problematic issues in conceptualizing different varieties of English. Through globalization, the varieties of English in the outer circle have become more established, so the boundaries between inner/outer circles and outer/expanding circles are becoming more fluid. For example, Kachru and Nelson (1996) revised the concentric circle model in which they coined the term "functional nativeness" in order to broaden the idea behind the definition of nativeness. Traditionally, the term *native* incorporates the idea that one needs to be tied to a specific geographical location on the map. However, in "functional nativeness" a native speaker can exist outside these boundaries. In addition, Yano (2001) found that some English speakers in Singapore felt as if they were native English speakers and that they had native speaker

intuition. Through these proposed modifications, the problematic issue of how to conceptualize different speakers within these circles is better understood.

Following these lines, Canagarajah (2006) relates how geopolitical changes have also changed Kachru's (1985) concentric circles. He reports:

- The outer circle boundary is more fluid, as outer circle varieties of English no longer exist just in their original context or border. In today's society, inner and outer circle speakers need to communicate in a global context.
- Now scholars such as Erling (2002) challenge the notion that the expanding circle should be distinguished from outer circle uses.
- No longer do the expanding circle norms depend on inner circle norms. Empirical research has shown that ELF speakers have independent norms in order to achieve intelligibility.
- Finally, non-native speakers outnumber native English speakers. And, the ownership of English and the native speaker model are being questioned.

Understood in these terms, researchers are calling for a re-conceptualization that answers the need to describe English as having a more fluid relationship between different, emerging, and changing communities. The newer term *English as a Lingua Franca* (*ELF*) has helped to conceptualize the ways these circles are expanding and changing shape.

The main difference between ELF and WE is that speakers of ELF use English

in situations that occur in highly variable socio/linguacultural networks as opposed to neatly definable communities. When English is used as a Lingua Franca, it is primarily driven by communicative needs in an international medium (Seidlhofer et al., 2006). Therefore, contexts in which ELF is used do not fit into conventional categories from Kachru's circles. ELF research does not focus on English as it is used in the expanding circle, but rather ELF research attempts to break down notions of speakers fitting into distinct groups. I will now turn to provide a working definition of ELF that will be used in the investigation of this report.

Defining English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)

Before taking a look at some current research perspectives of ELF, a clear definition of English as a Lingua Franca is needed. In the scope of this report, I will provide four principles on which to define ELF:

1) Through its *speakers*, who are the users of English as a Lingua Franca.
2) Through *settings*, where English is occurring in different contexts for communicative purposes as a contact language.
3) Through *function,* where ELF is used for communication between different non-native English speakers.
4) Through *research,* where ELF is beginning to flourish as a new field of study in sociolinguistics through developing corpora.

Now, I will elaborate on each definition in turn. First, a common misconception of ELF's *speakers* is that they are still learners of English (Hülmbauer, Böhringer, & Seidlhofer, 2008). ELF speakers are considered *users* of English whose main concern is not to conform to native speaker standards, but to be effective communicators. Even though ELF users may have some shared characteristics with learners of English, these are significantly different concepts.

Second, the *settings* in which ELF can occur includes a fairly expansive reach. The settings of ELF can happen in any place where English is used as the primary form of communication. Because ELF is not tied to a specific geographic location, the linguistic makeup of the participants is of increasing importance. Some researchers have contested whether or not native English speakers can be present in the setting of ELF communication. Alan Firth describes ELF as occurring in "…the setting where English is used exclusively by non-native speakers" (Firth, 1990, p. 269). In Firth's (1990) opinion, ELF is exclusively used by non-native speakers. However, more recently many scholars agree that the setting where ELF occurs can include native speakers of English as well (as in those in Kachru's inner circles) (Seidlhofer, 2004; Jenkins, 2007). At this point, ELF scholars have not reached any concrete decision about the setting of ELF communication. In this report, I have chosen to use the definition of ELF closely resembling Jenkins' (2007) inclusive definition which does not limit ELF to only speakers of the expanding circle, but all peoples who speak English internationally.

Thirdly, in terms of *function*, ELF is used as the preferred primary language among speakers who do not share another language. In many cases, these speakers are members of the expanding circles, but do not exclusively belong to that group. In the broad definition of ELF, which I have chosen to use in this report, native speakers can belong to ELF interactions—as will be investigated in some forthcoming empirical findings.

Fourthly, as this report begins to examine some of the empirical research conducted in ELF, the data from many of the ELF corpora include members of all three of Kachru's circles. ELF is being studied empirically to examine innovative uses and patterns of English through corpora of naturally occurring speech and writings (although little work has been done on written corpora to date). At this point, this research has included investigating the phonology of ELF (e.g. Jenkins, 2000), aspects of lexicogrammar (e.g. Dewey, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2004), and pragmatic discourse such as processes of accommodation and codeswitching (Cogo & Dewey, 2011). Above all, the aim of examining ELF research in this report is not to attempt to correct language 'errors' or to distinguish ELF as a particular variety of English. The aim of reviewing the empirical research of ELF is to highlight and characterize ELF as a hybrid and fluid language.

III. EMPIRICAL WORK IN ELF

ELF research began to flourish around the year 2000, in which the need for empirical research was called for from Jenkins (2000), Seidlhofer (2001), and Mauranen (2003). These early publications were focused on providing descriptions of naturally occurring speech in ELF settings. Specifically, the proposal of these early studies was to provide a sociolinguistic description of certain linguistic properties in ELF—such as phonology, pragmatics, and grammatical forms. Jenkins' (2000) book, "The Phonology of English as an International Language," was concerned with identifying phonological forms that aided in mutual intelligibility, and her work also touched on some of the accommodation that happens in ELF. This book provided a particularly formal description of ELF, and helped to establish a base for future empirical studies. Similarly, Seidlhofer (2001) published a conceptual paper which expressed the pressing need to investigate the contemporary uses of English worldwide. And recently after, Mauranen (2003) recommended that the basis for ELF empirical research should be grounded in the use of learner corpora.

After these influential articles, ELF continued to develop into a distinctive research field. In the early studies of ELF, the research orientation was concerned with providing descriptions of naturally occurring speech. Now however, the focus of empirical research has shifted from examining specific linguistic features of ELF to identifying the processes that underlie the varying forms that ELF takes. This shift

has occurred largely because researchers have realized that ELF communication is highly fluid and its linguistic forms are extremely variable (Cogo & Dewey, 2011). This report will trace research along these same lines as it emerged. First, early empirical research will be reviewed which examined linguistic descriptive features. Next, emerging research will be reviewed to study the fundamental processes of ELF forms.

In order to better highlight the importance of the empirical work in ELF research, a clear understanding of how corpora are used is first necessary to explain. To accomplish this goal, I will look to the field of corpus linguistics. I will now turn to a brief description of the traditional, historical roles of corpora as a way to frame the discussion of the incorporation of ELF research through the use of corpora.

Traditional Roles of Corpora

The purpose of corpora is to collect examples of real language (either spoken or written) by native speakers, non-native speakers, or learners of languages. Corpora can provide the opportunity to gain insight into how language is used (O'Keeffe & Farr, 2003). Recently, various types of corpora have been explored, and both spoken and written corpora show how people use language in different settings. Most corpora have been designed to be a representation of a specific language as a whole (Schmitt, 2000). However, some corpora have focused on

specialized genres, such as journalism, applied linguistics, and ELF (as in the focus of this report). In addition, spoken corpora can provide different types of information from that of written corpora.

One of the most basic things corpora can tell us is the frequency of words. Before the use of corpora, information about the frequency of words in a specific variety of language was based on intuition and guesswork (Thornbury, 2002). Frequency can indicate the most common words in a language. In addition to frequency, corpora are a particularly useful tool in examining collocations and idiomatic expressions of language. Collocations show which words are often presented together. For example, Thornbury (2002) illustrates the collocation principle by examining how the word *ugly* collocates more frequently with things than with people—expressions like *ugly situation* and *ugly state* are much more frequently used than *ugly man*, for instance.

One aspect of developing a corpus is to decide what variety of language you are going to use—whether it is British or American English, written or spoken, or native or non-native. According to O'Keeffe and Farr (2003), learner corpora are defined as "collections of texts produced by writers or speakers while they are still learners" (p. 410).

These studies in corpus linguistics have demonstrated how corpora analysis can aid in providing a detailed description of language as it occurs naturally. However, traditionally, corpus linguistic studies have been largely concerned with

native-speaker usage (Seidlhofer, 2001). Even learner corpora have been used to identify errors of the interlanguage of non-native speakers in attempts to analyze and correct usages of language.

Now, I turn my focus back to why corpus linguistics is beneficial for ELF research. I will show how researchers can use corpora as a way to gather information about how ELF speakers actually use the English language in specific contexts.

Reinterpretations of Corpora in ELF Research

Empirical studies through learner corpora are used as a means to analyze and define the norms and usages of ELF. Through corpora studies, scholars can attempt to describe phonological and pragmatic features that are characteristic of ELF communication (Seidlhofer, 2004). A large corpus can help provide the foundation for such a database to investigate the inner workings of ELF. To address the need for providing a base of empirical research, Seidlhofer (2001) and Mauranen (2003) began compiling ELF corpora of their own. The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE) (Seidlhofer, 2001) and the English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA) (Mauranen, 2003) are the first two important corpora that have been gathered as a basis for ELF empirical research. Information gathered from these corpora can help to provide insight about discourse markers, formulaic expressions, simplification, and unmarked linguistic

features (or basic forms). This valuable information can enhance our understanding of how English is used as a Lingua Franca.

To investigate the empirical research need for an ELF corpus, Mauranen (2003) cites three reasons justifying its development. First, ELF learner corpora could provide culture-specific characteristics on varieties of English, which could help lead to a simplification process of classifying unmarked features. Identifying these characteristics would help provide a base to ELF data and give evidence of specific patterning taking place. Second, ELF corpora could enable researchers to investigate descriptive lexicogrammar features. Corpora investigating the descriptive features of ELF could provide an answer as to what constitutes the core elements of standard ELF grammar. Third, empirical research using learner corpora can provide practical applications of ELF research. For example, one application could be the promotion of ELF, which could allow its speakers to have improved self-efficacy. With a strong empirical base of ELF, different communities that use ELF for communication could set up their own standards and norms of use. Pleas from these researchers were compelling, and after their publications, many researchers began to focus on the linguistic properties of ELF. As stated previously, I will now look at some of the empirical work done in ELF to date.

Early Empirical Work

Before the most influential work of larger scale ELF corpora was in place—i.e., VOICE Corpus (Seidlhofer, 2001) and ELFA Corpus (Mauranen, 2003)—, very little research existed in the form of empirical studies of ELF communication. However, a few studies were previously conducted and are worth mentioning here.

One of the first empirical studies done on ELF speech was by Firth (1996) in which he investigated telephone conversations of Danish companies speaking with their foreign partners. He hypothesized that Lingua Franca communicators largely accept ambiguity and ignore possible problem sources. In this study, he used recordings of telephone conversations and evaluated them from a conversation analysis perspective. Conversation analysis allows researchers to study how speech is structured and managed through social interactions. In these early findings, Firth (1996) discovered fluidity in conventional norms and also they found that participants tended to regularize potential problem areas instead initiating a repair or re-formulating utterances. In other words, when learners did not understand a lexical item, they did not address the problem source directly. Firth (1996) stated that participants adopted an attitude of 'let it pass' in the conversations, therefore confirming his original hypothesis. Interlocutors following this principle of 'let it pass' did not attempt to repair understanding under the assumption that the idea would be made apparent in the course of their dialogue.

Another important early empirical study to mention is one which provides insight into the phonological characteristics of ELF speech. Although describing these phonological features is not the focus of this report, it is important to recognize this research in its role of defining roots in early ELF empirical research. Jenkins (2000) argues that most of the intelligibility problems which occur in ELF are because of pronunciation. Jenkins (2000) compiled empirical data over several years and produced what she has called the phonological "Lingua Franca Core." She collected data from speakers of varying L1 backgrounds in order to determine which phonological features are essential or non-essential for intelligible pronunciations when used in the context of ELF. Jenkins has since pointed out that some of these initial findings may need modification in lieu of more empirical data; however, this article has helped in providing a base of research for phonological features in ELF communication (Seidlhofer, 2004).

To date, the most well documented work done in ELF corpora has stemmed from English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA) and The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE). These corpora have been the basis of studying many features of ELF, such as phonology, lexicogrammar, and pragmatics. Because these corpora have been vital to the understanding of ELF, it is necessary to show what can be learned from them. In the analysis of these corpora, data shows how non-native speakers (NNS) can achieve success in the environments and contexts in which they function.

Mauranen (2003) described the characteristics of how people use English in academic settings. Specifically she wanted to answer questions as to how teachers and students attend to demanding tasks in English as a second language. She examined discourse features which were used to successfully complete tasks when English is used as a Lingua Franca. To do so, she started the project of English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings (ELFA). The ELFA project was started in 2001 based out of the University of Helsinki and developed a one million-word corpus of spoken academic English. This article helped provide an important research starting point for numerous studies to follow. Some of the findings of the research that uses the ELFA corpus have shown that ELF speakers use both varying and similar patterns to native speakers and to other ELF speakers. For example, ELF speakers use vague expressions like native speakers, but the frequency and distribution of these forms may be different (Ranta, 2006, 2009; Metsa¨-Ketela¨, 2006).

An additionally important ELF corpus to note is The Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English (VOICE). This spoken corpus was developed by the Department of English at the University of Vienna and made public in 2009. The initial aim of this corpus was to provide a description of spoken ELF interactions in contexts all over the globe (Breiteneder, Pitzl, Majewski, & Klimpfinger, 2006). The settings of transcribed speech range from professional, informal, to educational, and include different participant roles and relationships. VOICE is also being used to increase findings about ELF phonology, features of lexicogrammar, and

characterizations of how English is co-constructed. An interesting question that can be asked from the VOICE corpus is if emerging structures of ELF arise regardless of the speakers' L1and level of L2 proficiency. An additional question of interest is to whether typical 'errors' viewed in the classroom or grammar books impede communicative success. So far, researchers (i.e. Hollander, 2002; Kordon, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2003) hypothesize that some specific features usually classified as errors are generally unproblematic in successful ELF communication (Breiteneder et al., 2006). Seidlhofer (2004) reports some of the initial findings that do not interfere with effective discourse from the work of the ELFA and VOICE projects as providing descriptions on specific phonological and lexicogrammar features. *Figure 2* is a summary of the findings:

∗ no third-person singular present tense -s marking

∗ interchangeable use of the relative pronouns *who* and *which*

∗ flexible use of definite and indefinite articles

∗ pluralization of mass nouns

∗ use of the demonstrative *this* with both singular and plural nouns

∗ extension of the uses of certain 'general' verbs

∗ use of a uniform, invariable question tag

∗ insertion of additional prepositions and nouns

(Hülmbauer, 2007 as adapted from Seidlhofer, 2005)

Figure 2

EFL researchers regard these findings to be significant because these hypotheses are features which were previously viewed as errors in Standard English. These findings were among the first to represent part of what might constitute the characteristics of ELF lexicogrammar.

Small-Scale Corpora Studies

After the initial corpus-based research in ELF was called for by the VOICE and ELFA projects researchers began to focus on building corpus studies of their own in order to fill in additional research gaps and address concerns about the validity of initial findings (Seidlhofer, 2004). While the empirical work is still

emerging and gaining more relevance in ELF, these smaller-scale corpora studies can help better understand the phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon of ELF. In this report, some tenets of these findings are presented—specifically in the areas of lexicogrammar and pragmatics. While describing each study embarked on in ELF research would be beyond the scope of this report, I have chosen some key research that highlights some of the essential findings in ELF empirical research.

House (2003) addresses some relevant research findings on the widespread use of ELF. She collected data from international students at Hamburg University to find out the nature of ELF interactions between students with different L1s (aged 25-35). The data collected was a mixture of authentic and simulated ELF interactions. She used interactions between international speakers and compared these to native English speaker interactions. She also did a comparison of participants with English native speakers and German native speakers. She analyzed the discourse markers of these various groups to find any instances of misunderstandings and behavior pattern variations. She found that:

1) Different conventions of foreign transfer into ELF communication do not lead to misunderstandings. For example, in her study, three speakers from Asian countries recycled topics during their discourse regardless of where and how the conversation had developed. This resulted in a set of "parallel monologues" instead of attuning to individuals' utterances. A participant

cited this strategy is common in Indonesian discourse (his native language).

2) The discourse marker "represent" is used to signify the previous speaker's move to aid in comprehension. While the results were not conclusive, one interpretation of the extended use of the word "represent" may originate from a tradition of 'Asian politeness' in which the use of "represent" is part of being polite.

3) Solidarity is displayed to cooperate and co-construct utterances. That is, ELF speakers can unite as non-native speakers because they are in a sense 'all in the same boat' together. One way House (2003) found this manifested through these conversations was by the speakers' overt collaboration and co-construction of discourse.

House (2003) states that these interactions display the users' native culture-conditioned ways of interacting and that ELF appears to be an effective communicative tool because communication breakdowns did not occur.

Drawing on previous research, Meierkord (2004) found comparable results to those of Firth (1996). One research gap Meierkord (2004) wanted to address in her study was how syntactic variation occurs in informal conversations in ELF

contexts. To do this, Meierkord conducted a study to examine syntactic variation using informal recordings from 49 speakers of English from outer circle (Botswana, Kenya, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zambia) and expanding circle countries (Germany, Jordania, Lithuania, Malta, Tunisia, Egypt, France, Vietnam, Iraq, Netherlands, Spain, Zaire, Eritrea, Korea, Laos, Norway, and Saudi Arabia). She audio-recorded English dinner conversations at a British student residence among students from these many L1 backgrounds. The speakers ranged from "very competent" to "less competent."

First, Meierkord (2004) analyzed the syntactic features of utterances quantitatively to determine syntax patterns. She found that regardless of origin from the outer or expanding circles, the very competent users' utterances matched 94-95% of grammatical correctness to either British English or American English norms. The less competent speakers diverged 22% of the time and experienced 73% grammatical correctness. However, she found these users of ELF focused on strategies such as simplification and regularization to aid in communication. In her corpus, simplification was observed when the speakers preferred to use smaller units of utterances instead of complex sentences. Hence, there is a reduced level of complexity in the syntax. She noticed regularization occurring when users chose to use forms that explicitly conveyed their meaning move the topic to the beginning of the phrase or utterance.

Some individual characteristics of marked speech were observed in speakers from similar origins (i.e. speakers from India, speakers from African countries). The characteristics identified were pronoun deletion, word-ordering, and prepositional use. Even though the less competent ELF speakers originating from expanding circle countries produced more marked features (22%), discourse strategies still allowed them to communicate effectively. Additionally, she found that ELF speakers used much more non-verbal communication and shorter turns when speaking than native English speakers. In sum, she found ELF to be a more varied form of English syntactically which demonstrates three qualities: 1) consistency following the norms of L1 English, 2) "transfer phenomena" in which patterns of *nativised* forms emerged, and 3) discourses occur with simplification and regularization.

Cogo and Dewey (2006) add to the emerging corpora work in ELF communication by drawing from two corpora of natural interactions which were compiled for PhD projects at King's College London. Specifically, their aim was to report on findings about pragmatics and lexicogrammatical features. They show how pragmatic motives can possibly change formations in lexical features which characterize lexicogrammatical innovations in ELF. The four main participants in this study had different L1 backgrounds (French, German, Italian, and Japanese); however the total number of participants was 55, representing 17 first languages. The corpus has transcribed 38 communicative events which totals 8 hours in duration. All participants were classified as "highly competent speakers of English,"

and their language therefore was treated as a legitimate variation of English (not as a failed or incomplete version) (Cogo & Dewey, 2006, p. 64).

In the transcripts of discourse, the scholars found common discourse techniques used by all such as negotiation of meaning and backchanneling. Negotiation of meaning occurs when the participants incorporate features of communication that help communication be cooperative and supportive. Backchanneling occurs when the speaker uses verbal and nonverbal cues (such as, *uh, yeah, right*, head nods and smiling) to signal to the listener they are paying attention and want the speaker to continue. In the non-native speaker group, they also found the importance of accommodation for successful conversations. Particularly, this strategy of accommodation has also been found to help account for phonological variation in ELF pragmatics (Jenkins, 2000).

Furthermore, Cogo and Dewey (2006) reported that repetition is a frequently used accommodation strategy in ELF. In these data of ELF discourse, efficiency was a main motivator to any changes in the speakers' lexicogrammar. In the analysis of their results, Cogo and Dewey (2006) drew from Seidlhofer (2005)'s original hypothesis (see *Figure 2*) and were able to confirm her tenets and add more ELF communicative features. One tenet that was overwhelmingly confirmed was a significantly reduced occurrence of -s in 3rd person singular auxiliary verbs (i.e. *does, has*). They reported that the use of 3rd person auxiliaries is very low in overall number, but also their distribution is specific to setting. In their results, they found

two additional features characteristic of ELF speech from Seidlhofer (2005). First, ELF communication has a preference for infinitives over the use of gerunds (i.e. *interested to do* more than *interested in doing*). Secondly, ELF communication has an exploited redundancy, especially in omission of objects and complements of transitive verbs (i.e. *I wanted to go with* and *you can borrow*).

Dewey (2007) used a small-scale corpus to investigate lexicogrammatical innovations. The study used 42 communicative episodes in different contexts—from informal, unplanned conversations to more formal seminar presentations. Drawing from the work of the VOICE corpus (Breiteneder, 2005; Seidlhofer, 2004), the study wanted to further investigate issues of enhanced prominence, increasing explicitness, and prepositional use. First of all, data from the concordance show instances where ELF speakers used the definite article with abstract nouns when referring to the generic definition. For example, words such as "nature," "society," and "pollution" were used with the article "the" in abstract terms (e.g. "…they wanted to survive in the nature or the society" (Dewey, 2007, p. 340)). On the other hand, the findings showed that speakers often choose to use the "zero article" where a native speaker English would have included the article. This choice was particularly the case with ordinal numbers (*the first, the second*) and superlative adjectives (*the most, the worst*) where semantically, the article is redundant because of the inherent unique nature of these words.

Secondly, the corpus data investigated showed ELF speakers using increased repetition, synonymy, and rephrasing. Dewey (2007) stated that perhaps there is a perception that increased repetition is important for effective communication. For example, in a transcript taken from a dissertation presentation at King's College London, the speaker says, "English is in the national- English this subject is in the national curriculum." The speaker here repeats "English" and adds "this subject" to make clear that English, as a school subject, is her intended meaning. The speaker is attempting to highlight meaning to ensure clarity in communication. In addition, Dewey (2007) found that topics are often repeated through using a subject-pronoun patterning in ELF. This repetition was found to be true especially in unrehearsed spoken discourse. For example, "I mean you can buy only *those books which you think they're* really useful." Dewey (2007) hypothesizes that this use of repetition is permitted in ELF communication as a means to help orient the listener and ensure clarity.

As the previous studies mentioned all relate to spoken discourse in ELF, I want to highlight one interesting study representative of written corpora analysis in ELF. In particular, Boyle (2011) undertook a qualitative study as a means to add to the research in ELF through written corpora (Cogo & Dewey, 2006; Mauranen, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2004), and to address the research need of using corpora to obtain reliable data (Kachru, 2008). The research questions in this study all attempt to

examine and identify the changes that occur in English as a result from borrowing, leveling, and accommodation.

Because of the nature of this exploratory study, researchers decided to provide a qualitative study instead of using a general survey of quantitative nature. The goal was to provide a general description of the pragmatic and lexicogrammatical features forming in this multilingual community. The materials used to study the lexicogrammatical systems were the pages of the English newspaper (the *Gulf News*) published in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Six to eight articles were collected every day for about 18 months—totaling up to about one million words. The instrument and procedure used in this study were the process of manual tagging in which any innovative lexicogrammar constructions were tagged. The results of this study essentially confirmed the researcher's initial hypothesis—there is evidence of emerging patterns of change in lexicogrammatical features in this variety of ELF. Specifically, certain features of the ELF variety became apparent:

1) Infinitive clauses occurred twice as often as gerunds clauses (as in *suggested to discuss; insisted to pay; avoid to sin* rather than *suggested discussing; insisted paying; avoid sinning*).
2) There is more instability in the use of transitive and intransitive verbs (e.g. "He *reassured* the support of the ministry to the programmes" (Boyle, 2011, p. 154).

3) There is a tendency to make uncountable nouns countable especially in idiomatic phrases (e.g. "It is not yet time to press the panic *buttons";* "I take off my *hats* to them" (Boyle, 2011, p.156).

Therefore, Boyle's (2011) aim to expand and answer a practical need to accompany the theories of ELF research was accomplished through this study. This study helps establish a base for future researchers to undertake qualitative research in the context of ELF innovation patterns. As other corpus-based studies point out, one issue with corpora is how to go about *what* to choose to look at in the corpus (Cobb, 2003). Certainly, this is the case with many ELF empirical studies, and Boyle (2011) is an example of how to approach this type of research.

In sum, the purpose of this chapter has been to illustrate some of the specific conspicuous aspects of lexicon and grammar revealed through empirical research. With these articles, only a number of salient features of lexicogrammar have been discussed—there are many more features that may become apparent through subsequent research. Therefore, in my discussion, I can conclude that some significant innovative patterns have been revealed which include aspects of pragmatics and lexicogrammar.

Summary of Empirical Research

In terms of pragmatics, many of the features described here were not found to impede successful communication. Firth (1996) showed that ELF speakers tend to adopt a 'let it pass' principle in which users accept ambiguity in discourse, trusting the intended meaning to make itself apparent. Additionally, Meierkord (2004) observed transfer patterns from speakers' L1 backgrounds in ELF communication, specifically through simplification and regularization; however, these marked characteristics did not hinder meaning. Along those lines, House (2003) found that ELF users were tolerant of foreign transfer patterns into English communication. She even went so far as to say that these characteristics have the power to unite non-native speakers as they collaborate and co-construct meaning through communication.

In terms of lexicogrammar, Cogo and Dewey (2006) helped support some of Seidlhofer's (2004) initial findings from the ELFA and VOICE corpora. Specifically, the lack of the third person singular –s marking was central to their confirmations. In addition, Cogo and Dewey discovered ELF lexicogrammatical patterns from a preference of infinitives over gerunds, and ELF communication tended to have an omission of objects and complements when used with transitive verbs. Furthermore, Dewey (2007) added to these findings a year later by also discovering patterns of increased repetition, synonymy, and rephrasing in ELF. Boyle (2011) found similar lexicogrammatical features even in written ELF communication. Like

Cogo and Dewey (2006), Boyle (2011) also found a pattern of overuse with infinitive clauses. He also discovered instability in transitive and intransitive verbs and discovered ways users tended to pluralize uncountable nouns. Therefore, empirical research has shown some tangible innovative features in ELF, and these patterns exist in principled ways to help orient ELF speakers in communication of meaning.

IV. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF ELF

With the rise of the globalization of English, scholars have faced numerous challenges as to how to conceptualize ELF. From a sociolinguistic perspective into globalization, ways in which communication in ELF is fluid across contexts present complications into how to think about traditional regions and borders (Cogo & Dewey, 2011). To better understand these issues of conceptualizing ELF in the age of globalization, scholars in ELF can help frame the important trends in this field.

The Global Community of English

The interactions used in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) take place in contexts that are highly linguistically and socioculturally diverse (Cogo & Dewey, 2011). Therefore, the conventional notion of a neatly defined speech community does not apply to the dynamic and diverse way in which ELF is used. Seidlhofer (2004) reiterates these concerns, saying there is a need to broaden the definition of the speech community to include a conceptual space for ELF.

Specifically, Seidlhofer (2007) questions the existing conceptual frameworks of ELF as a "community" and "variety" to argue that English as a Lingua Franca requires a completely new conceptual framework. She says the problems with these terms in the traditional sense is the way a variety is seen to emerge out of a particular community—which is not the case with ELF. Seidlhofer (2007) proposes

a new concept of "community" should exist in the ELF framework—which is a "community of practice." Therefore, as English exists in the global context, the close traditional tie between territory and cultural identity is changing.

Re-evaluating the Speech Community and Native Speaker Norm

Most of the use of English today is performed by non-native speakers (about 80%); the number of non-native speakers is greater than the number of native speakers (Crystal, 2003). In light of this finding, this leaves many scholars perplexed as to who has the ownership rights of English. The traditional view of a monolingual native speaker being the ideal has been questioned as the language classroom is being understood as a multilingual community (Blyth, 1995). As Kramsch (1998) aptly describes, being a non-native speaker is a "prerogative, a right, and even a privilege."

Even before researchers in the ELF community backlashed against the native speaker ideal model, some scholars criticized the construct of the native speaker as the goal of ultimate attainment. Among the first to bring the issue to the forefront were Firth and Wagner (1997), in which they asserted there was a skewed view in current Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research because it was based on the premise that foreign language users were deficient communicators who needed to overcome their non-native speaker incompetence. Even further, they argued against the term "non-native speaker" over the preferred term of "language user." Cook

(1999) argued that SLA research should focus more on the L2 user rather than the native speaker—and the L2 user should be viewed as competent in their own regard rather than be compared to monolingual speakers. In his view, learners are not failed native speakers because it would be clearly impossible for them to become a native speaker of another language. Therefore, the goal of ultimate attainment should not be viewed as a battle that can never be won, but rather non-native speakers should recognize their exceptional status as a link between two cultures and peoples. In this way, students could view themselves as 'multicompetent' users and not as failing to reach native-speaker standards (Cook, 1999). Therefore, one problem underlying conceptual issues in ELF stems from the pull between native and non-native norms.

House (2003) states that ELF speech cannot be compared to an ideal English norm, and she suggests new research directions for English as a Lingua Franca. First, ELF should be thought of from both an individual perspective and a social perspective. ELF acquisition is a social process, and conditions of language spread will lead to change. Secondly, the term 'interlanguage' should not be used to describe ELF, as it should be considered within the concept of the community of practice. And thirdly, discourse behavior in ELF should be rethought. The norm cannot be the monolingual English native speaker.

Summary of Selected Modern Theoretical Perspectives

As many have stated (Dewey 2007; House 2003; Jenkins 2006; Seidlhofer 2001), research into ELF emerged out of the many various multilingual communities now around the world in which English is used as the primary means of communication between two non-native speakers. When thinking about the overarching global spread of English, there are two important sides to consider. In one way, having a common language (Lingua Franca) is convenient to developing understanding of different beliefs, values, and cultures. ELF has the power to enable opportunities for multilateral relationships. However, in another way, the spread of English has become so powerful it has the potential to drive minor languages to extinction. Thus, the hope for the English language is not to be used as a tool to suppress these languages through global spreading, but rather to help users develop a communicative competency in a multicultural and multilingual context.

Communicative competency has been defined as the incorporation of acquiring components of language ability that include interactional and social elements (Hymes, 1974). In other words, not only are rules about pronunciation and grammar as well as vocabulary needed, but learners also need to be able to use these components in a socially and culturally appropriate way. When a learner becomes removed from these contexts (such as an EFL context) and English is not used as the native language, discrepancies and gaps can arise in developing communicative competence (Yano, 2001).

In particular, House (2003) identified the most important characteristics of ELF as being language that is negotiable and variable in terms of speaker proficiency. Specifically, she clarifies that ELF negates the concept of language being used for identification. Drawing on previous researchers, Kramsch (2002) suggests that identity does not need to be unitary and fixed. In other words, ELF is not a national language; therefore, it does not have to be a factor for identity nor is assimilative motivation a factor because its speakers need not be a member of a particular L1 group.

Theoretical debates abound in ELF research regarding the norms and standards of ELF. House (2003) focuses on how ELF should provide ways to mask cultural affinities and identities through use of English. In her view, culture should be irrelevant in ELF. However, she further argues: "Paradoxical as this may seem, the very spread of ELF may stimulate members of minority languages to insist on their own local language for emotional bonding to their own culture, history and tradition" (p. 561). She points to a recent revival of popularity in German cultural music as one implication. Other researchers argue against this concept (Crystal, 2003) to state that American English will play a vital role in the cultural norms of ELF. These disputes show conflicting theoretical implications of ELF—it is yet to be seen how these discrepancies between communication and identity in ELF will eventually play out.

V. PEDAGOGICAL PUZZLE

In a way, this investigation into ELF research has brought me to realize some implications that I did not expect. The transition from English as a Lingua Franca empirical work to language pedagogy is not a straightforward relationship. It is not a matter of attempting to teach ELF as a "variety" of English. On the surface, this statement may seem contradictory and surprising because the lexicogrammatical features are possibly the most salient characteristics of ELF speech. However, simply put, because ELF is not a particular variety of English, it does not need to be taught and perhaps cannot be taught.

There are three main recommendations I want to make about how ELF research can impact the classroom. First, teachers should help students become competent in a range of communities and help them negotiate these contexts. In order to place focus back in the hands of learner, the teacher's role needs to expand to include more than language teaching. One of the implications of the global expansion of English includes the social and affective factors which help the learner better navigate the contexts in which English is used. Having teachers deliberately engage in actively assisting students in developing these types of social roles may be an important way the teacher can empower the learner.

Canagarajah (2001) discusses how teachers should nurture their students to negotiate creatively and provide students opportunities for critical expression.

Students should be allowed the freedom to transfer between communities and literacies in the context for which they are aiming. This may be realized through taking the focus away from a single language competency or dialect in the classroom.

Secondly, teachers can help promote positive identities in the classroom in regard to a more globally diverse community. In ELF, there is no clear homogeneous speech community. Instead, ELF is a mixed, heterogeneous community with users across the globe. A teacher's goal should be to focus on how these speakers achieve success across borders through sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and discourse strategies of negotiating meaning. As Canagarajah (2006) points out, competence should not be viewed by lexicogrammatical structures but rather be viewed through performance and pragmatics. Through these terms, cultural values and identities can be celebrated through the practice of ELF, rather than ELF suppressing cultural identities—and mistaken as a bland identity-free variety of English.

Thirdly, an emerging role of an ELF teacher is to cater to his/her learner's specific purpose. In this way, Critical Pedagogy provides insightful ways to allow ELF speakers succeed in their personal discourse communities (Dewey, 2007). Learners should be provided with the specific vocabulary and lexicogrammar structures to ensure the success they want in their English speaking goals. As we understand Critical Pedagogy in ELF, the learning is placed back into the hands of

the students to meet their specific needs, instead of having the research dictate the pedagogy in the classroom.

All of these pedagogical recommendations hinge on one crucial fact: teachers and students need to know about ELF. It is important for teachers of English to be versed in ways the language is used globally and present students with the variants that occur in ELF. Students could have a better expectation and understanding of their learning process if teachers share with them the many ways ELF speakers communicate—which is most frequently with other non-native speakers (Crystal, 2003). Knowing that non-native varieties of English are both useful and acceptable should help students become more comfortable with their own levels of English proficiency and improve self-efficacy.

In particular, skills such as practicing accommodation, reinforcing meaning, and indicating non-understanding will be useful techniques for the ELF speaker to learn. Referencing back to Firth's (1996) early empirical work in ELF, his 'let it pass' strategy would help raise students' awareness of how communication often occurs between two non-native speakers of English. Teachers could allow their students to analyze dialogues from ELF corpora to discover patterns of accommodation and adjustments made by the speakers.

Further, personal attitudes, including patience, empathy, and tolerance can help users negotiate meanings and also allow speakers to maintain a conversation fully. This is not only a responsibility of the user of ELF, but a listener can employ

these techniques as well. Even English native speakers can find their place as ELF spreads globally by bringing a tolerant attitude to conversations with ELF users.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

ELF is still far from making significant impacts into the field of second language research. However, the ways in which English is spreading and revealing the nature of multilingual environments will help people gain more understanding of ELF. Although an emerging well-developed base of empirical studies is in place, most of the findings of ELF are primarily based on small-scale corpus studies, in which users' contexts and purposes drastically vary. Further research and a larger corpora base have the potential to provide more insights into the types of grammar and pragmatics being investigated.

In my view, one specific limitation of ELF is the overwhelming prominence of research in European contexts. We have yet to see research emerge in other places. It is my hope with this report to help ELF gain traction as a viable research area in North American contexts. Furthermore, it is my hope that teachers and users of English become aware of some characteristics of ELF communication—not to inform curriculum but rather to promote tolerance and acceptance of non-native speakers of English.

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